

Helps and Hints

Family Child Care Newsletter

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University**

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Helps and Hints Family
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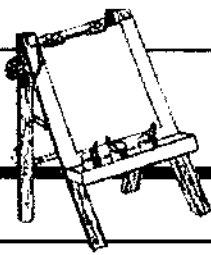
Language Arts

And much more!

In The Garden...

Springtime is a time for all the new plants and flowers to bloom and grow. Why not take a peek at our *In the Garden* theme to find resources and activities for your young gardeners to get started planting their own gardens? What better way to involve children in teamwork while learning life science concepts and environmental awareness than with a garden?

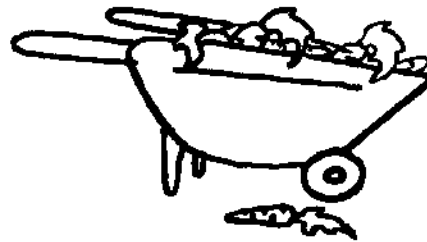




Art & Creativity

Wheel Barrow Planter

- Laundry detergent scoop
- 2 plastic milk jug lids
- 6" length of ribbon
- Potting soil
- Flower seeds
- Craft glue
- Water



Put out materials, and help children to glue a milk jug lid to each side of the scoop to form the wheels. Allow the glue to dry. Tie the ribbon to the handle of the scoop. Fill the scoop with potting soil. Plant the seeds. Sprinkle the soil with a few drops of water. You can have the children make these planters as gifts.

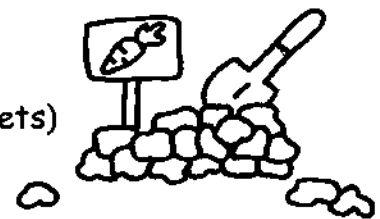
Garden Scene Painting

- Finger-paint (blue)
- Tissue paper for flowers or small paper baking cups
- Paper stems or pipe cleaners
- Seeds
- Sand, green paper, or Easter grass
- Finger-painting paper

Let children finger paint on paper then stick on tissue paper flowers, paper stems, seeds, and sand to form a garden.

Designing a Flower Garden

- Paper
- Markers & Crayons
- Pictures of flowers (use old seed catalogs & seed packets)
- Ice cream sticks
- Box
- Brown paper



Encourage children to select the flowers they want in their garden by looking through old seed catalogs & seed packets. Glue pictures, drawings, or old seed packets onto ice cream sticks. Make a raised flower plot by using the top (or lid) of a box and covering it with brown paper. The children stick their flower sticks in this plot to create a three-dimensional flower garden.

Literature Extension

Little Peter Rabbit (to the tune of "John Brown's Body")

Little Peter Rabbit had a fly upon his ear
Little Peter Rabbit had a fly upon his ear
Little Peter Rabbit had a fly upon his ear
And he flicked it till it flew away!

Little Peter Rabbit had a fly upon his _____
Little Peter Rabbit had a fly upon his _____
Little Peter Rabbit had a fly upon his _____
And he flicked it till it flew away!

Little Peter Rabbit had a _____ upon his _____
Little Peter Rabbit had a _____ upon his _____
Little Peter Rabbit had a _____ upon his _____
And he flicked it till it flew away!

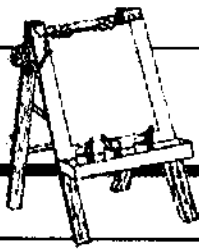
Little Peter _____ had a _____ upon his _____
Little Peter _____ had a _____ upon his _____
Little Peter _____ had a _____ upon his _____
And he flicked it till it flew away!

Little _____ had a _____ upon his _____
Little _____ had a _____ upon his _____
Little _____ had a _____ upon his _____
And he flicked it till it flew away!

Snack:

Serve bread, milk and blackberries like Flopsy, Mopsy and Cotton-Tail had at the end of the story.





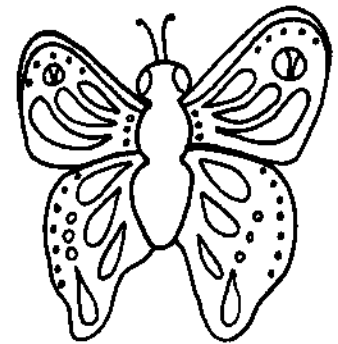
Art & Creativity

Handy Flowers

Children trace their hands on colored paper of their choice. Provide stamps of insects or grass. Encourage children to cut or tear paper into strips for stems.

Stained Glass Butterflies

Using dark colored paper, trace a butterfly shape onto it. Then in the center of each wing, cut a large teardrop shaped opening. Apply clear contact paper over one side, and then encourage children to use colored tissue paper to color their wings. Hang in window.



Paper Gardens

- Easter grass
- Pipe cleaners
- Paper
- Markers/crayons/paint
- Glue
- Muffin liners

Children glue grass onto the paper and design their own gardens. They can choose to paint their own flowers or use pipe cleaners or torn pieces of construction paper or muffin liners to form them.

Lima Beans

- Beans
- Paper
- Markers/crayons/paint
- Other art supplies of your choice

Glue a bean to the bottom of a piece of paper. Ask your children to draw on the paper what they think will grow from the bean.

Foot or Hand Flower

Paint & paper

Paint the bottom of the child's foot or hand and let them put it on paper. They can then add a stem and other decorations they choose to the picture.

*Remember for all creative activities: provide materials for children and let them choose the ones they want to use. Encourage them to use the materials to make their own individual creations!

Literature Extension

Peter Rabbit

By Beatrix Potter



Illustrate this story with the following supplies:

- From the produce aisle at your local grocer or your own garden collect: lettuce, French beans, radishes, parsley, cucumber, cabbage, and potato
- Watering Can
- A stuffed bunny small enough to fit into the watering can to use as Peter Rabbit
- Four other stuffed bunnies to be Mother, Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-Tail
- You could look for some doll shoes or infant shoes at a garage sale to fit the Peter bunny and a small jacket. Infant clothing will often fit stuffed toys.
- Toy rake, hoe and wheelbarrow would also add to the story.

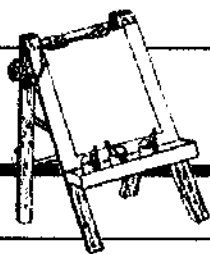
Read or tell the story of Peter Rabbit. After you read the story discuss what happened. Ask the children, "Why do you think Peter disobeyed his mother? What happened when he disobeyed his mother?"

Let the children taste each of the different produce mentioned in the story. Talk about the produce - the color, texture, smell, and the sound it makes when the children bite into it, and compare the taste. You could graph which vegetables the children liked best and see which one was the most popular. Peter disobeyed his mother and got into a lot of trouble to eat his vegetables. Discuss whether the children ever disobey their mother to eat something they really like. Discuss how Peter could have obeyed his mother and how he could have kept out of the garden.

Gross Motor: Have the children run on two legs and then try to run as Peter did on all fours. Peter ran faster on all fours - can the children? Ask them why they can't run as fast on four legs as on two. Let them do some reasoning to think this out. Let the children take turns pretending to be Peter and Mr. McGregor and chase one another.

Social/Art: Work together to make a scarecrow for your garden. You can use old clothes and shoes to dress the scarecrow. Talk to the children about what a scarecrow is and why people put them in gardens.

Dramatic Play: Help the children set up Peter Rabbit's home with dramatic play clothing so the children can pretend to be the rabbit family, Mr. McGregor, etc.

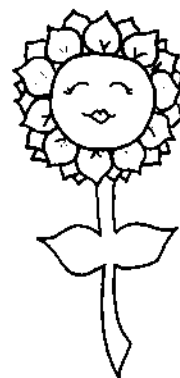


Art & Creativity

Paper Plate Sunflower

- Paper plates
- Yellow paper
- Paint
- Glue
- Sunflower seeds or oatmeal

Give your children paper plates. Have them cut out petals from the yellow paper and attach them around the paper plate. They can then add sunflower seeds or oatmeal to the seed part of the flower.



Leaf Tie-Dye

Leaves & flowers (various colors preferred)

Cloth (light colored)

Mallet or hammer

Put the leaves and flowers on the floor or the counter. Place the cloth on top of the leaves and flowers. Hit the cloth with mallet or hammer until the leaves and flowers are ground up. This will put a neat pattern on the cloth. Watch children with mallets very closely.

Garden Markers

Art materials

Gardening magazines

Hot glue or glue

Craft sticks for everyone

Let the children create their own garden markers by drawing pictures of plants they are planting or want to plant.

Ladybug

Make a paper plate ladybug: Encourage children to make a ladybug by painting the backside of a paper plate black and another one red. Cut the red plate in half and add black construction paper circles to each half. Attach the halves on top of the black paper plate with a brad.

Use a black construction paper circle to create the ladybug's head and black chenille stems or construction paper to form antennae. Attach a short string to the front of each ladybug. As the child holds onto the string and moves, the ladybug will fly behind!



Book List

BOOK LIST

Books marked with an ** are included in the Department of Child Care Early Childhood Division's Story of the Month web site:

http://www.state.ar.us/childcare/DCCECE_serv.html Flannel board story pieces are available for printing.

The Garden of Happiness by Erika Tamar

The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss **

Good Grief, Gardening Is Hard Work by Charles Shultz

The Vegetables Go to Bed by Christopher King

A Pumpkin Story by Mariko Shinju

Lentil Soup by Joe Lasker

The Gigantic Turnip by Aleksei Tolstoy

Too Many Pumpkins by Linda White The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

In the Tall, Tall Grass by Denise Fleming **

Stripey the Caterpillar by Katie George

The Butterfly Alphabet by Kjell B. Sandved

Flying Things(Tactile Book) by Rod Campbell

Creepy Things(Tactile Book) by Rod Campbell

I Can't Said the Ant by Polly Cameron

Two Bad Ants by Chris Van Allsburg

The Celery Stalks at Midnight by James Howe

A Garden Alphabet by Isabel Wilner

Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables by Lois Ehlert

Me and My Veggies by Isaac Whitlatch

Gregory, the Terrible Eater by Mitchell Sharmat

I Can Grow Vegetables by David Magill

Making Minestrone by Stella Blackstone and Nan Brooks

The Gardener by Sarah Stewart

How Does Your Garden Grow by Pat Patterson

Two Little Gardeners by Margaret Wise Brown

Pumpkin, Pumpkin by Jan Titherington **

The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle

Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter



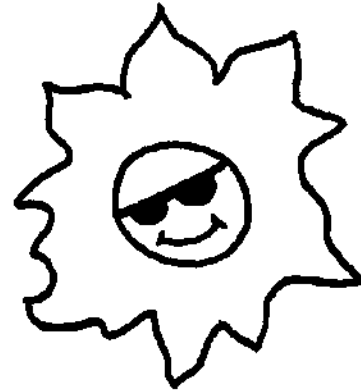
Sing, Song, Sway

Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary

Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockleshells
And pretty maids all in a row.

A Little Sun

A little sun (hold arms above head)
A little rain (wiggle fingers in the air in a downward motion)
Now pull up all the weeds (pretend to pull weeds).
Our flowers grow, all in a row (hold up all fingers lined up like flowers)
From tiny little seeds (hold thumb & finger to show size of seeds).



The Gardening Song

First you take a shovel, a rake & a hoe,
Plant a little garden, plant seeds in a row.
Water them and weed them
Through all the summer heat,
And then you'll have some flower
Or vegetables to eat.

My Garden

This is my garden (extend one hand forward, palm up)
I'll rake it with care (Raking motion on palm with 3 fingers of other hand)
And then some flower seeds (Planting motion)
I'll plant in there.
The sun will shine (make circle with hands)
And the rain will fall (Let fingers flutter down to lap)

I'm A Little Flower Pot

I'm a little flower pot Mom put out
If you take care of me, I will sprout.
When you water me, I will grow



Language Arts

Make a garden scrapbook. Take pictures of the kids during the whole process. Press the seed packets and have a journal for the kids to write down thoughts and progress of their garden.



Plan a Garden

Work together to plan a garden. Use a large piece of butcher or other large paper and let the children decide what they would like to plant and where. Draw the garden together on the large piece of paper. A teacher could provide cut outs of various vegetables, fruit and flowers for the children to glue onto the garden plan. Discuss what needs to be done to prepare to plant a garden. What do we want to plant? When will we need to plant? What tools will we need to plant? Have toy hoes, rakes, trowels, and wheelbarrow, available. You and the children could measure the area you intend to use for a garden (even if it is a pretend garden). Decide how much space each variety of plants will need, whether it needs sunshine or shade, etc.

Consider a theme garden:

- Salad garden: lettuce, cucumbers, carrots and other salad fillers
- Pizza Garden: tomatoes, mushrooms, peppers, etc.
- Colors garden: Red tomatoes, orange pumpkins, yellow squash, purple eggplant, green cucumbers, blue flowers, etc. etc.

If you do not have room for a large garden, consider Garden in a Bucket: Use a galvanized bucket and plant one kind of plant in it. For instance, tomatoes. On the outside of the bucket paint a picture of a smiling tomato.

Zones

Provide several different types of seed packets. Choose seeds that have a variety of planting times. Show the children the picture of the zones on the back of the package and discuss the planting instructions. Locate your own "zone" on the back of the package. Use a large map of the United States to discuss the zones. Why would there be different zones? What zone are we in? What is the weather like where we live? Help them use a calendar to determine when they should plant each variety of seed.



Sing, Song, Sway

I'm a Little Flower Seed

(Tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")

I'm a little flower seed
I'm planted in the earth
I feel the sun come down on me
To warm this big old Earth.
The rain begins to come and gets rid of my
thirst
I then become a big and pretty flower
Won't you pick me first?

I'll Plant a Little Seed

(Tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")

I'll plant a little seed in the dark, dark
ground
Out comes the yellow sun, big and round.
Down comes the cool rain, soft & slow,
Up comes the little seed--grow, grow,
grow!

Planting Time

(Tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

Dig, dig, dig the earth
Then you plant your seeds
A gentle rain
And bright sunshine
Will help your flowers grow.

Seeds

Dig a hole deep in the ground
Spread some tiny seeds around
Pat them down--so they will keep
They are lying fast asleep
Rain will help the seed to grown
Sunshine keeps them warm I know.

The Seeds Grow

(Tune of "The Farmer in the Dell")

The gardener plants the seeds,
The gardener plants the seeds,
Deep down inside the ground
The gardener plants the seeds.

The rain clouds give them water,
The rain clouds give them water,
Seeds need some water to drink
The rain clouds give them water!

The sun gives heat and light,
The sun gives heat and light,
Seeds like it warm and bright,
The sun gives heat and light!

The gardener pulls the weeds,
The gardener pulls the weeds,
Seeds need the room to grow,
The gardener pulls the weeds.

The seeds grow into flowers,
The seeds grow into flowers,
Flowers that are beautiful,
The seeds grow into flowers!

I'm a Tiny Seed

(Tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")

I'm a tiny seed, deep in the ground
I lie asleep--I don't make a sound
I am waking up now--
see me sprout!



Language Arts

A Seedling

I am only now a seedling planted with hands so very young,
I have but just one wish, to reach and touch the sun.
My little leaves are fragile, my stem is very new,
My roots can barely hold me up, but you can help me through.
I need only a few things, to keep me alive and well,
Some water, love and sunshine, then time will surely tell.
If my leaves look kind of droopy, something to drink will do the trick
Feed me a little fertilizer to prevent me from getting sick.
This pot I live in now is a temporary hold;
I'll need to be replanted, as I will soon grow old.
The hardest thing to do, my friend, is to sit and watch and wait
For the wonderful surprise I'll bring, please be patient and have faith,
For your effort, love and support will all be over soon.
Visit me in a month or two and I'll reward you with a bloom,
But please don't cut me down; I can surprise you once again,
Let me finish my flower and seed and next year, I'll be back, my friend.

Very Hungry Caterpillar

Tie up a piece of clothesline to retell your story. Make large fruits with holes for the five days and a leaf. Using a clothespin, pin these on the clothesline in sequential order. Make a caterpillar from a green tongue depressor and pompoms. Have children eat through the fruit with the caterpillar as you tell the story.



Ladybug, Ladybug

Gardeners are happy when they see ladybugs in their gardens. Discuss with your children why ladybugs make a gardener happy. (Ladybugs eat smaller insects such as aphids, which can kill a plant. Ladybugs like to eat aphids very much.)

Using picture insect cards, try this language activity to the rhythm of Brown Bear: "Ladybug, Ladybug what do you see? I see a cricket looking at me", etc.



Sing, Song, Sway

The Seed

(Tune: "Farmer in the Dell")

The farmer sows his seeds.
The farmer sows his seeds.
Hi-Ho the dairy-o,
The farmer sows his seeds.



Other verses:

The rain begins to fall...
The sun begins to shine...
The seeds begin to grow..
The plants grow big and tall...
The farmer cuts his corn...
And now the harvest is on....

Mary Planted Her Garden

(Tune: "Mary Had a Little Lamb")

Mary planted her garden,
Her garden, her garden.
Mary planted her garden
With rows of pretty bells.
Mary planted her garden,
Her garden her garden.
Mary planted her garden,
With rows of cockleshells
(let children make up additional verses as desired)

Out in My Garden

(Tune: "Down by the Station")

Out in my garden
early in the morning
see the little vegetables all in a row
see the rows of carrots
and the rows of peas.
Water, hoe, grow, grow
In my garden please.

Down in the Garden

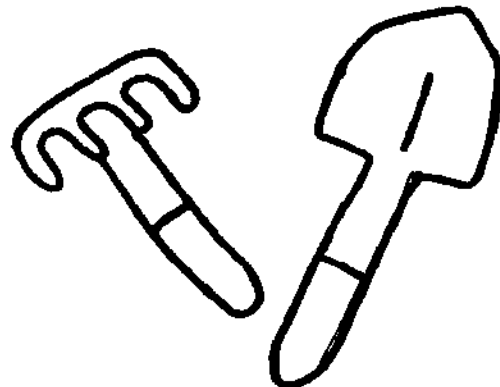
(Tune: "Down by the Station")

Down in the garden,
Early in the morning,
See the yellow daffodils all in a row.
(bow heads.)
See them lift their head and
Give their horns a blow
(lift head and pretend to blow horns)
Toot, toot, toot, toot, off they go.

Dig and Hoe

(Tune: "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean")

In my garden I like to work,
In my garden I dig in the ground,
In my garden I grow great big vegetables
and have lots of flowers around.
Dig, hoe, dig, hoe
In my garden this grows, grows, grows.
Dig, hoe, dig, hoe
In my garden things grow.



Multicultural Diversity

Talk to the children about what types of vegetables and fruits they eat in their homes. Bring in a variety of culturally diverse vegetables and fruits. Many produce aisles contain a wide variety of produce. Give your children the opportunity to touch, smell and taste a variety of produce.

Ask parents to share favorite recipes for preparing fresh garden produce.

Ask children to draw their favorite flower. Use non-fiction flower books to talk about what part of the world their flower comes from. Find that place on the globe.

Find pictures of different farming methods from around the world. Use as talk pictures to talk about the different ways produce can be grown.

Read *The Garden of Happiness* by Erika Tamar.





Sing, Song, Sway

This is the Way We Plant Our Seeds

(Tune: "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush.")

This is the way we plant our seeds,
Plant our seeds, plant our seeds.
This is the way we plant our seeds,
Early in the morning.

This is the way the wind does blow,
Wind does blow, wind does blow.
This is the way the wind does blow,
Early in the morning.

This is the way the rain comes down,
Rain comes down, rain comes down.
This is the way the rain comes down,
Early in the morning.

This is the way the sun shines bright,
Sun shines bright, sun shines bright.
This is the way the sun shines bright,
Early in the morning.

This is the way the seed grows up,
Seed grows up, seed grows up.
This is the way the seed grows up,
Early in the morning.

This is the way we hoe the soil,
Hoe the soil, hoe the soil.
This is the way we hoe the soil,
Early in the morning.

This is the way we pick our beans,
Pick our beans, pick our beans.

This is the way we pick our beans,
Early in the morning.

Over In The Garden

(Tune: "Over in the Meadow")

Over in the garden with a rake and a hoe,
I'll plant some little seeds in a nice
straight row.

"Grow," I will say. "Please grow all day long."
And the little seeds will grow
Into plants big and strong.
And my garden will blossom (Cup hands
together; extend upward slowly)
And grow straight and tall.



Dramatic Play

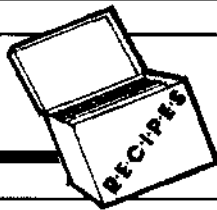


Gardening Center

Props to add to the gardening center: cash register, play money, check book and play checks, order tablet and pen, calculator, telephone, gardening gloves, straw hats, gardening hats, seed packets (can make from envelopes draw or print or glue the picture of the various plants on the front), silk and plastic flowers, vases, toy wheelbarrow, trowels, hoes, rakes, paper bags to carry the items from the "store", play vegetables, flowers, fruits, signs with prices marked.

Flower Shop:

Props to add to the flower shop center: cash register, toy money, check book and play checks, order tablet, pen, calculator, telephone, silk and plastic flowers, vases, baskets, ribbon of various colors, lengths and widths, raffia, and any types of craft materials for children to create bouquets, flower arrangements, etc.



Snacks

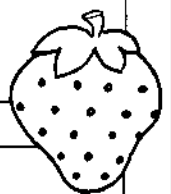
Stone Soup

This can be a day's activity. While reading "Stone Soup" (a popular children's book) the children and teachers can make their own pot of soup. Set it up so each child has a vegetable to put into the pot. As you read the book, the child hears his or her vegetable and must bring it up and put it into the pot. This way everyone gets a turn! Then you can prepare the soup all together by giving each child a job (i.e.-helping cut the tomatoes). By the end of the day, students and teachers can all try the soup!

Ants on a Log

- celery or extra large pretzels
- peanut butter
- raisins

Spread peanut butter or cream cheese on celery or pretzels. Add raisins for ants.



Caterpillar Fruit Snack

- small plastic cups
- various fruits: apple, plums, oranges, pears, strawberries

On the first cup draw a caterpillar face with antennas; in the following cups add the fruit. You can also write the days of the week and act out *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.



Infant & Toddler Activities

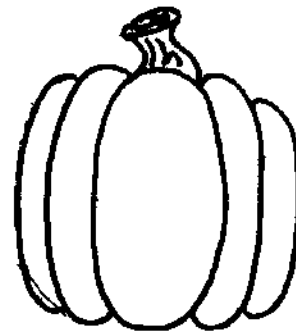
Use bright colored produce advertisements to create a mobile for the little ones to look at while being diapered or in the crib.

Fresh produce is very brightly colored. Thoroughly wash brightly colored produce such as orange carrots, green celery, purple eggplant, or red radishes. Allow the little ones to handle the produce. Watch carefully so the infants do not nibble off a piece of the produce and choke. As they handle the various items talk to them about the way the produce feels. "That carrot is bumpy, isn't it?" or "Do you like this smooth purple eggplant?" etc.

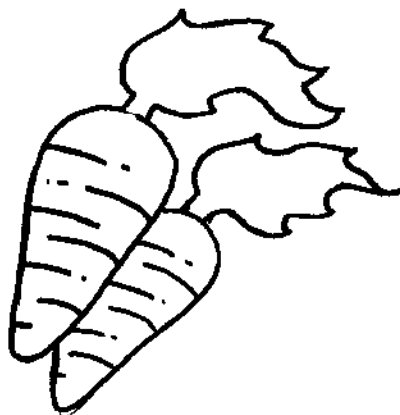
This Little Piggy Fingerplay

(Use like you would This Little Piggy)

This little piggy went to the garden,
This little piggy stayed in,
This little piggy worked hard all day.
This little piggy played in his pigpen,
And this little piggy went yum, yum, yum while he ate!



Put several items of fresh produce into a lunch bag or grocery sack. Peek into the bag. Ask the children "What do you think I have in this bag?". Let them reach a hand inside and feel what is there and guess what they have found. As they explore, talk about the textures and smells and let them have a taste of each item.



Science

Root Viewer

Begin by taking a cardboard milk carton and cutting out a flap on one side; cut three sides so it can be opened like a door. Tape a piece of plastic wrap over this window on the inside. Fill the carton with soil and plant a couple of seeds (pumpkin works well). Place the side opposite the window up on a block. The carton is at an angle. When the plant begins to grow, the roots will grow towards the window, allowing you to open the window and see the roots. Be sure to keep the window closed when not viewing.

Grow A Pine Cone Tree

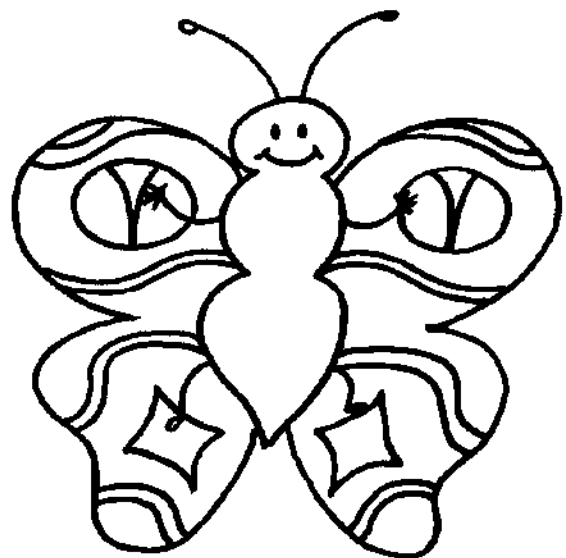
Pine cone for each child (keep inside over night so they will be dry and wide open)
grass seed in measuring cup or cup with pouring spout
small jar in which pine cone can sit but not go all the way into water in bowl.

Each child will wet their pine cone in the bowl of water. Fill a jar with water and set the pine cone in the top of the jar. About 1/4 of the pine cone needs to fit snugly in the jar and reach the water. Sprinkle the pine cone generously with grass seed. Place the jars in a windowsill. Help the children add water to their jars when needed. Be careful not to wash the seeds away. Grass will sprout in a few days.

Grow Your Name

- small box (roughly half the size of a shoebox)
- grass seed
- potting soil

Get small boxes, line them with plastic, and fill them with potting soil. Have your children scratch out their name in the soil. Then sprinkle grass seeds into the name. Gently cover it with soil and soon you will have their name growing in a garden.





Math & Manipulatives

File Folder Game

Get two advertising flyers showing gardening tools from a local store. Cut out, glue on tag board and laminate one set of tools. Cut out and mount the other set inside a file folder. Children will match the tools.



Trace around cut outs of gardening tools. Cut out and mount in file folder. Paste cut outs on tag board and laminate for playing pieces. Children will match the outline of the garden tool with the tool itself.

Draw, print from computer, or cut from advertisement pictures of vegetables, fruit and flowers found in gardening. Mount one set of the pictures inside a file folder; mount a second set on tag board; laminate and cut out. Children match the plants.

Cut out fruits and vegetables and mount on tag board; laminate. On plain white paper, draw around each cut out, putting all the vegetables on one piece of paper and all the fruit on another piece of paper. Label one paper "vegetables" and one paper "fruit". Mount the drawings in a file folder. Children will sort the fruits and

Playdough

Make playdough worms.

Garden Matching

Make a memory game using two identical nursery catalogs. Cut out the identical pictures and glue on index cards.

Bean Soup

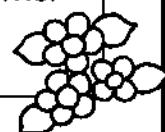
Provide a bag of *15 Bean Soup*. Encourage the children to sort and count the beans. Caution: This should be closely supervised so children do not put beans in their nose or ears, etc.

Measuring

Use a plastic worm to measure things around the room. Chart how many worms long the various things are.

Counting Tulips

Cut out 10 tulips or other flowers, fruits or vegetables that would grow in the ground. Hot glue to craft sticks. Program the tulips with numbers 1 - 10. Cover a box with brown contact paper. Cut 10 slits in the box and program them with small dots 1 through 10. Children can match the tulips and "plant" them in the slit with the appropriate number of dots. Remember, some children may want to sort by color or another characteristic!



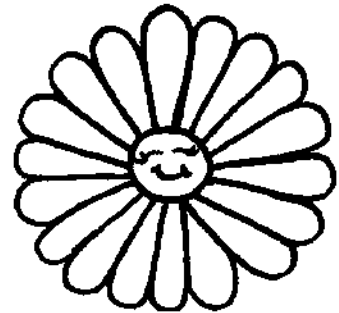
Science

Rooting a Sweet Potato

To root a sweet potato in water, push toothpicks halfway into the potato. Then place the potato in a glass of water with the toothpicks resting on the top rim. Make sure the end of the potato is immersed in water. Place the glass where it will receive adequate light. Maintain the water level so that the bottom of the potato is always immersed. Note that in a few weeks roots will grow out of the sides and bottom of the potato, and leaves will grow out of the top. The plant can be left in the water or replanted in soil. This activity provides the children an opportunity to observe root growth.

Chia Pet Egg

eggshell with the top 1/4 broken off
ring cut from an empty paper towel roll to hold the eggshell
3 damp cotton balls
1/8 teaspoon alfalfa seeds
fine tip markers



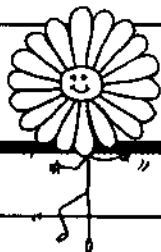
Set the empty eggshell in the holder cut from the empty paper towel roll or part of egg carton. Draw a face on the eggshell with colored markers. Place damp cotton balls inside eggshell. Sprinkle seeds over the cotton and keep the cotton damp. In two or three days, the seeds will begin to sprout. Put in a sunny spot. As the sprouts grow, your child can give the egg friend a "haircut".

Cup of Seeds

Stuff crumpled paper towels into a clear plastic cup, and add water to dampen but not soak them. Place some seeds between the side of the cup and the paper towel so that they are visible from the outside. Cover the cup with plastic wrap and tape a second cup on top of the first. Observe the seeds for a while. Once they start to grow you may want to transplant them to potting soil.

Bottle Greenhouse

Make a greenhouse out of 2-liter soda bottles. Cut them in half beforehand and peel off the label. Make slits going long ways so the top section will fit over the bottom section. Fill with dirt and plant bean seeds, flower seeds, grass, or whatever you have. Put the top section back on. Put them in a sunny spot. The great thing is you only have to water them about once or twice a week. The items really grow great and it gets really warm inside of the soda bottle!



Block Center

Tape pictures of flowers, vegetables, fruits, etc. to the blocks. Children can set them up and pretend they are plants growing in a garden or use other blocks as fence. Put toy forest animals and pets in the block center. Discuss how we can keep deer, rabbits, dogs, etc., from damaging our garden.



Motor Skills

Wheelbarrow Races

One child holds onto another child's ankles; the first child uses his hands to walk forward while the second child runs behind holding up the other child's ankles.

Circle Game

Walk around in circle with one child in middle as flower, and sing (to the tune of "London Bridge"):

"Little flower, oh what do you need,
What do you need, what do you need?
Little flower, oh what do you need,
To grow up big and strong?"

The child then names something the flower needs and chooses someone to come into the center (e.g. water, support, sunshine, nutrients).

Worm Jump

Wiggle a rope on the floor and have children jump over the "giant worm".

Flower Relay Races

Relay races are done in teams. The players of each team must race to a vase full of artificial or paper flowers, pick a flower out of the vase, and race back to their team. The next person races down to the flowers, picks one, and so on. The first team to finish is the winner, or finish when everyone has had a turn.

A Bouquet

Place a colorful bouquet of flowers in front of your children. Point out the different heights of the flowers. The children then move the flowers into a second vase, moving the tallest flower first, then the next tallest, etc. When the smallest flower is finally moved, find a place in the room for the bouquet.

Sorting Seeds

Provide empty egg cartons and a variety of seeds for the children to sort. Provide tweezers to help them sort the seeds.

Science

Sprouting Seeds

- Ziplock bags
- bean seeds or popcorn
- paper towels
- water
- scotch tape



Help children place a moistened paper towel in a re-sealable plastic bag. Add a few black watermelon seeds, bean seeds or popcorn. Seal the bag and hang in a sunny window. Check the progress of the seeds every day. Keep the paper towel moist. When the sprouts have come up, help the child transplant the plant into a flower pot or other container.

Sponge Gardens

- small sponges
- clear plastic bags
- string
- fast growing seeds such as grass, clover, mustard or herbs.

Moisten sponges and push seeds into the holes of the topside of the sponge. Place sponges inside a clear plastic bag with the seed side of the sponge facing upward. Tie a string around the top of the bag and hang in a sunny window. Watch the gardens grow! (You could tie this in with *Sponge Bob Square Pants* if you want to...use yellow sponges and create "hair" for *Sponge Bob*.)

Circle of Life

This is especially good if you read the book *Pumpkin, Pumpkin* by Jan Titherington before cutting your jack-o-lantern. (You can find flannel board pieces for this book on the DCCECE Story of the Month web site: <http://www.state.ar.us/childcare/index2.html>.)

In the fall when you cut your Halloween pumpkin, save some of the seeds to plant. After Halloween, put your pumpkin outside. Put an old tire around it to remind children where it is. Watch the pumpkin decay. In the spring, plant the pumpkin seeds inside the tire and watch them grow. Harvest the pumpkins in the fall. The children can see the entire pumpkin cycle circle of seeds, growth, pumpkin pies, decay, and then new growth again. Take weekly pictures of the pumpkin to make a complete display for the children.

Supply several varieties of plants for the children to compare. Provide magnifying glasses for them to examine them.

Provide a scale so the children can weigh the seeds and produce. Help children compare and graph the weights of tomatoes, potatoes, etc.

Sensory Play

Sand and Water Tub

The sand and water area can become a garden by adding these materials:

- planting soil free of hazards for children (some soils you buy contain certain additives to help stimulate plant growth which are harmful for the children to play in)
- plastic trowel
- gardening gloves
- seeds to plant
- plastic pots to plant the seeds in
- water
- toy or real watering can
- rain gauge



Children love to dig. If you do not have a sandbox, choose a corner of your yard and let the children dig there. Mark the corner with rocks, wood border, or something to indicate the digging area. Supply the children with trowels, old spoons, toy shovels, toy dishes, or anything with which they can use to dig and dump.

If you don't want to sacrifice your lawn, think about providing a sandbox for the children. Sand is very inexpensive - around \$6.00 for a small pick up bed load.

Pour a small bag of potting soil and some plastic fishing worms into your sensory table. Add child-sized gardening tools. Very surprised kids!



Science

Observing Seeds and Buds

Put several types of seeds, bulbs, leaves, buds and roots on the science table. Provide magnifying glasses so the children can take a closer look at them to observe the small details. Plant carrot seeds, or cut off the top of carrots and plant in water. Encourage children to watch them grow in a sunny window. Put them low enough so even your youngest can look at them with some supervision. The children will check their plants daily. Plant in clear plastic drinking cups and the children can watch the root growth also. Put one plant in a dark spot. Compare the growth with plants placed in good sunlight and in the dark. Provide rulers to measure growth.



Colored Daisies

- white daisies
- regular food colors
- vase or glass
- water

Fill vase or glass with water and add a couple of drops of food coloring. Place some daisies in the colored water and as they absorb the water, they absorb the food coloring thus changing the color of the flower. The children can see the flower drink the water as the days go by. For a colorful bouquet use several different glasses of water with different colors in each. The children will enjoy watching the daisies change colors! You can also do a similar activity using celery stalks and watching the color go up the stalk.

Grassy Caterpillars

- 1 knee high nylon stocking per child
- potting soil
- grass seed

Let each child fill his stocking with potting soil/seed mix. Tie off and place on a styrofoam tray and set in windowsill. For added fun, put extra large wiggle eyes on one end. Keep moist with spray. Children can give their caterpillars a haircut when the grass gets too long.

Birdseed Garden

- birdseeds
- sponge
- plastic plate

Place a sponge soaked with water in a plastic plate and allow child to sprinkle it with birdseeds. Place the plate in a sunny place and watch for the seeds to sprout!